

[David Delcore, Times Argus](#)

A Websterville-based wind turbine manufacturer will receive a \$620,000 infusion of federal funding to further its work in the area of renewable energy.

The U.S. Department of Energy (D.O.E.) announced Monday that Northern Power Systems is one of five firms nationwide that will split more than \$5 million in wind energy money over the next two years.

Northern Power Systems' share of the funds will be used to accelerate the first phase of development, testing and commercialization of a domestically manufactured midsize wind turbine.

The project that Northern Power successfully pitched to the D.O.E. is expected to leverage nearly \$10 million in private sector capital to develop a 450-kilowatt turbine that the company expects can produce energy at a reduced cost. The turbines would be small enough to install at local sites such as schools, farms, factories and other facilities, reducing the need for new transmission wires needed with a larger wind project, while still powerful enough to provide a suitable mid-sized power source.

The newly obtained funding will help finance completion of the final turbine design, procurement and prototype testing within 18 months, according to D.O.E. officials, who said Northern Power – like three of the other five grantees – will be able to apply for up to \$4 million in additional funding for a second phase of their work.

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced the series of grants that he said will help reach the goal of doubling U.S. renewable energy generation capacity, while promoting energy security, environmental quality and clean energy jobs.

"Wind power holds enormous potential to help reach our nation's clean energy goals," Chu said

Monday. "Today's awards will help better integrate wind energy into the electrical grid and will support the development of midsize wind turbines that can be used to provide renewable electricity in communities across the country."

Jim Stover, vice president of product management and engineering at Northern Power, welcomed word the company's grant application was approved.

"Selection by D.O.E. validates our world-class technology position in permanent magnet direct-drive turbine development," Stover said, suggesting the company received a helping hand from Vermont's lawmakers in Washington, Senators Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders and Rep. Peter Welch.

"Northern Power Systems greatly appreciates the support of our congressional delegation," he said.

Vermont's congressional delegation had urged D.O.E. officials to support a proposal that they said is projected to create additional jobs at Northern Power and its suppliers and "has the potential to meet a critical need in America's growing green economy."

John Ciempa, a spokesman for Northern Power said it was not immediately clear how many new jobs will be created as a result of the grant award. He said the company, which currently employs roughly 160 workers in Vermont, hopes to have a better estimate later this week.

"We just found out about it," he said.

Ciempa said the 450-kilowatt turbine that the company has proposed is larger than the its increasingly popular 100-kilowatt model – like the one recently installed at its the Barre Town manufacturing plant – but far smaller than the utility-scale 2.2-megawatt turbine that is now being developed there.

